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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

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Tripoli, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
13 - 19 May 1990

AFRICA'S CHARTER FOR POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION (ARUSHA 1990)

Adopted by

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS IN AFRICA

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and affects the awakening and promotion of the popular participation. In that context co-operation in all its forms must be transparent and reflect African priorities.

11. African and non-African NGOs and civil society in addition to their traditional humanitarian activities are increasingly playing an important role in the productive capacities of the African poor and the promoting environmentally sound patterns of local development.

F. At level of the Member States and Governments

1. The national and regional media should make every effort to fight for and defend their freedom of action and make strong effort to champion the cause of popular participation and promote activities and programmes liberal and generally provide access for the dissemination of information and education programmes on popular participation.

2. Combining their endogenous communication systems with appropriate use of modern low cost communication technology, African communities and NGOs, civic and trade unions and other social organizations must strengthen their communication capacities for development. Regional and sub-regional workshops on the assessment of African Development Support Communication Needs are to be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Decade.

F. At the level of women organizations

In ensuring that the participation of women at decision-making processes is enhanced and strengthened, popular women organizations should:

1. Continue to [illegible] to [illegible] of [illegible] access women

2. Strive for the establishment of [illegible] and reflect and recognize women's role as producers, mothers, active community mobilizers and custodians of culture.

3. Seek to ensure the full understanding of such issues as law and the society (increase) of women's role in the economic and transformation of Africa so that men and women together stand as [illegible] and partner in the process of action.

4. Implement measures to create the [illegible] [illegible] (a) advocating to the public at large, including central and local governments organs, the importance of [illegible] in the home and community, especially in the areas of water and wood fuel [illegible] (b) promoting the establishment and proper functioning of community [illegible] (c) [illegible] in all institutions and (d) striving to ensure economic equality by advocating the rights of women to land and greater access to credit.

2. Be democratic, autonomous and accountable organizations.

c. At the level of organized labour

Trade Unions should:

1. be democratic, accountable, self-governing and accountable organizations;

2. initiate dynamic and broad-based literacy and training programmes;

3. organize and mobilize rural workers in accordance with ILO Convention 141 which African governments are already encouraging;

4. defend trade union rights, in particular the right to strike;

5. assist in the formation of workers' cooperatives;

6. assist in promoting the management of productive activities such as the establishment of small rural credit and savings;

7. give special attention to effective and wide-ranging participation of women members at all levels of organization;

8. promote work place democracy through the call for the protection of workers' rights, the freedom of association, collective bargaining and participatory management.

d. At the level of youth organizations and their organizations

Considering the centrality of the youth and students in Africa's population and the recovery and development process the following actions should be taken:

1. Preparation and adoption of a Charter on Youth and Students Rights to include the right to education, employment and free and public expression.

2. The full democratic participation of youth and students in African society requires massive efforts to be developed including organizations like parents and the youth themselves to eliminate the major impediments to youth participation, such as frequent harassment of youth and student organizations, police brutality against unarmed protesting students, detention and harassment of candidates, dismissal from studies and the frequent and arbitrary closure of educational institutions.

3. Youth, students and schools and the international community must join forces urgently to counter existing and profitable criminal activities, like encouraging governments to sign and ratify the international convention on the Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Psychotropic substances.

4. The advancement of youth participation in development also requires the protection of Africa's future leaders from forced recruitment, whether by national or insurgent rebel groups.

25. We are convinced of the imperative necessity to follow-up and monitor the implementation of this Charter and to report periodically thereon on progress achieved as well as problems encountered. We accordingly recommend that at the national level a follow-up mechanism on which representatives at high level of Government, trade unions, women's organizations, NGOs, Vivos, grass-roots and youth and student organizations will be members.

26. At the regional level, we propose a joint OAU/ECA Regional Monitoring Machinery on which also, in addition to representatives of these two organizations will be representatives of the network of organizations, named above. This regional monitoring group will submit biennial progress reports on the implementation of the Charter to the ECA Conference of Ministers and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU.

CONCLUSION

27. This Conference has taken place during a period when the world continues to witness tumultuous changes in Eastern Europe. Even more dramatically, this Conference has taken place during the very week when Nelson Mandela's release has exhilarated all of Africa, and galvanized the international community.

28. There is an inescapable thread of continuity between those events and our Conference: it is the power of people to effect momentous change. At no other time in the post-war period has popular participation had so astonishing and profound an impact.

29. History and experience both teach that this world never works in compartments. The forces of freedom and democracy are contagious. Inevitably, and irresistibly, popular participation will have a vital role to play on the continent of Africa, and play that role we will.

30. It is manifestly unacceptable that development and transformation in Africa, can proceed without the full participation of its people. It is manifestly unacceptable that the people and their organizations be excluded from the decision-making process. It is manifestly unacceptable that popular participation be seen as anything less than the centerpiece in the struggle to achieve economic and social justice for all.

31. In promoting popular participation, it is necessary to recognize that a new partnership and compact must be forged among all the ACTORS in the process of social, political and economic change. Without this collective commitment, popular participation is neither possible nor capable of producing results. We, therefore, pledge to work together in this new partnership to promote full and effective participation by the masses together with Governments in the recovery and development process in Africa.

32. We, the people here assembled, have no illusion that the Charter will be embraced overnight by all of those to whom it is directed. But we are confident that this document is an indispensable step on the road to everything we would wish for the people of Africa.

Done at Arusha
The United Republic of Tanzania
16 February 1990

RESOLUTION 1

TRANSMITTAL OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER FOR POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION (ARUSHA, 1990)

TO THE OAU MINISTERIAL COUNCIL AND ECA CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS

The Conference:

Recalling General Assembly resolution S-13/2 on the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 (UN-PAAERD),

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 43/27 and its annex on the mid-term review and appraisal of the implementation of UN-PAAERD,

Mindful of ECA Conference of Ministers resolution 684 (XXIV) entitled "International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa",

Aware of the need to mobilize support from every quarter for promoting Popular Participation in the recovery and development process in Africa,

1. Expresses its deep appreciation to the Government and People of the United Republic of Tanzania for having hosted the meeting so generously;

2. Also expresses its appreciations to His Excellency Ali Hassan Mwinyi, President of the United Republic of Tanzania for officially opening the Conference and for the inspiring address which he delivered;

3. Requests the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to transmit the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation (Arusha, 1990) to both the twenty-sixth Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU and to the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations for their information and such necessary action as they may deem fit.